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&c., has had his name transmitted to posterity, commanding our admiration, and thereby forms a most striking contrast to that of the Pontiff Liberius, who deserted him to an unjust persecution of the Arians. I find the historian states that Felix, Liberius's rival, was irregularly chosen, by the influence of the eunuchs of the palace, and that "a general assembly being convened, the clergy bound themselves, by a public oath, never to desert his predecessor, never to acknowledge the usurper, Felix," and to which they adhered until Liberius's return. This does not look as if he had been recognised as Pontiff during Liberius's banishment.

I am your obedient servant,  
A TRUTH-SEEKER.

Moira, January.

Nothing can be more agreeable to us than to enter into discussion with so candid an inquirer. Our object, like his, is truth; and we shall ever be ready to admit a mistake, when it is shown to us; but as yet we do not see that we have made any mistake in this matter.

"The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," is not just the kind of authority for our pages. The author, Gibbon, was an infidel; and it was his great object to place every thing relating to Christianity in such a light as might lead others to become infidels too. And this wicked desire has led him often to give the grossest misrepresentations of the opinions and doctrines which have prevailed in the Church. And about the facts of the case, Gibbon is too late a witness; he wrote 1400 years afterwards; his statements are worth nothing, except so far as he took them from ancient historians. It is much shorter and more satisfactory to go to the old historians at once. On such a question, we greatly prefer Roman Catholics to infidels; and we prefer ancient Catholics to both.

We take our correspondent's facts in the order he places them in.

**I. The Council at Seleucia.** One hundred and fifty bishops were collected there; thirty were for abolishing the Nicene Creed; altogether one hundred and twenty were for putting out the word, "of one substance with the Father," the words which, alone, Arians never could get over, and which the Council of Nice had adopted for that very reason. Scarcely a voice appears to have been raised at the Council in favour of the faith of Nice. Some one proposed to adopt the creed which the Arians had drawn up at Antioch, in opposition to the creed of Nice. That proposal was adopted; the thirty withdrew, and composed a most heretical creed of their own; the one hundred and twenty subscribed the creed of Antioch. We take this account from the ecclesiastical historian, Socrates, who wrote his history about 80 years after the event. Book ii. ch. 39.

**II. The Council at Ariminum or Rimini.** There is no doubt whatever about the creed which was adopted at this council. It was the third creed of Sirmium—a creed drawn up under the personal direction of the Arian emperor, Constantius; and this creed was *unmistakably* Arian.

Accounts differ about the way in which this creed came to be adopted. One account seems to imply that a majority carried the Arian creed, in the first instance, and that a large minority always continued steadfast against it. Another account, more generally received, both by Roman Catholics and Protestants, states, that most were in favour of the Nicene creed at first, and that all signed the Arian creed in the end. But about the fact, that the Arian creed was adopted, there seems to be no dispute.

In our number for December, p. 142, col. 3, we noticed the account given by St. Vincent, of Lirins, who wrote about seventy years after the event—"Almost all the bishops of the Latin tongue deceived, partly by force, partly by fraud" (1st Commonitory, ch. 4.) In his 2nd Commonitory, ch. 29, he speaks of the great care taken at the Council of Ephesus—"lest there might, by chance, some profane novelty creep in, as happened at that perfidious meeting in Ariminum." The Jesuits Labbe and Cossart call this council "that assembly of Arians." Du Pin calls it "this council whose beginning was glorious, and end deplorable."

**III. About Pope Liberius.** Our correspondent says he was not at Rimini—"that is granted;" but that he was then in banishment for having refused to sanction the decrees of the Council of Milan, which council passed no decrees about faith, but only condemned Athanasius of crimes.

To this we reply:—

1st. All the Catholics of Milan treated the case of Athanasius as a question of faith. It was an Arian device to treat it only as a question of facts.

2nd. Both Socrates and Sozomen, the oldest and best ecclesiastical historians of that period, give us lists of the persons who were banished at the Milan Council, and neither of them include Pope Liberius. There is no reason to think that he was at that council at all (Soc., b. 2, ch. 36, Soz., b. 4, ch. 9).

3rd. Socrates states expressly that Liberius was at the Council of Ariminum, and that he was banished for refusing to subscribe the creed adopted in that council. (Book 2, ch. 37.) Sozomen gives two different accounts, one seeming to represent Liberius as banished a little before the council at Ariminum, the other expressly stating that he was banished at the council. It may be that both these accounts intended to apply to his banishment at the council. (Book 4, ch. 11, and 19).

The famous letter of Liberius was not intended to con-

firm the decrees of Milan: this is plain; for the letter is addressed to the eastern bishops, and proposed to confirm their decrees, whereas the decrees of Milan were passed by the western bishops.

But a further quotation from that same letter of Pope Liberius may serve to settle the question about him. After condemning Athanasius, the letter goes on—"My lord and fellow brother Demophilus, who has vouchsafed, of his own benevolence, to expound the true and Catholic faith, which was treated, finished, and received at Sirmium, by many brothers and fellow bishops of ours, this I receive with a willing mind, contradicting it in nothing." (Epis. 7, Labbe and Coss., vol. ii., p. 751.)

We know it is disputed what creed that was which Liberius signed; for there were three different creeds drawn up at Sirmium. But it matters little, for all three were Arian—all three expressly intended to get rid of the ever memorable decision adopted by the Council of Nice against Arius.

But who was that Demophilus who expounded the true faith to the Pope, and got him to sign the creed of Sirmium? He was an ARIAN BISHOP! How benevolent it was of him to teach the Pope, and with what praiseworthy humility the Pope submitted to be taught by that Arian bishop! But we know something more of Demophilus; he is expressly named both by Socrates (Book 2, ch. 37), and Sozomen (Book 4, ch. 17), as one of those who produced in the Council of Ariminum, and succeeding in passing there, the third Sirmian creed, drawn up under the direction of the Arian Emperor Constantius.

Now, whenever it was that Liberius was banished, it is clear that the end of his banishment, and his subscribing to the creed of Sirmium, was after the Council of Ariminum. What creed of Sirmium would Demophilus then expound to the Pope? Clearly, we think, that third creed which Demophilus had himself proposed and signed at Ariminum. And it was by the Empress's orders that Demophilus made the Pope sign this creed. What creed would the Emperor ask the Pope to sign? Would he ask him to sign either the first or the second, both of which the Emperor had himself rejected and condemned? Or would he ask the Pope to sign the third creed, which the Emperor himself had got drawn up and approved? We do not want to be positive in a question that is disputed; nor is it necessary for us to be so, as all three Sirmian creeds were Arian; but it certainly is our opinion that it was the third creed of Sirmium—that is, the creed which was passed by Ariminum—that Pope Liberius signed. And it is to be observed that all the ancient fathers who wrote of the matter, St. Athanasius himself, St. Hilary, St. Jerome, all speak of Liberius as having fallen into heresy.

So the case stands thus: the Emperor summoned a general council; the eastern bishops to meet at Seleucia, the western at Ariminum. Nearly 600 bishops met. They decreed, in both places, to reverse the most important and essential point of the decision made at Nice against Arius; and the Pope confirmed their decisions. Yet Roman Catholics must all acknowledge that Pope and Council together were wrong in an essential article of the Christian faith.

We say with confidence that if that Pope and council had decided in favour of the Nicene faith, it would have been regarded, to all generations, as a LAWFUL GENERAL COUNCIL. Why is it not so regarded? Simply because it decided wrong. If a Pope and a general council decide right, we are to follow them; if they decide wrong, we are to regret their decision. The decrees of a council are to be tried by the Catholic faith; the Catholic faith is to be supported, but not to be tried, by the decrees of councils.

If Ariminum, Seleucia, and Pope Liberius had decided right, would any Catholic ever have denied them the character of a true and lawful general council? Why do we deny them that character but because we see that they decided wrong?

If Roman Catholics confess, as they do, that both Pope and council here were wrong; how can they turn round on us and say that Pope and council must be *always* right?

P.S.—We have received another letter from our correspondent, who signs himself "A Roman Catholic," on the subject of Pope Liberius. It is rather long, and contains more subjects than suit a letter for our pages. But we should certainly have published it, only that we had already fully answered its principal point about Pope Liberius, in our remarks on the foregoing letter of "A Truth-seeker," before the other letter was received. Our readers would hardly approve of the same things being said twice over in our pages. In this letter "A Roman Catholic" gives up the decision against Berengarius, which he defended in his last. He now says "We do not hold Pope Nicolas and his 113 bishops to be a general council, and, therefore, we do not hold ourselves accountable for their decision." It is, however, an awkward fact, that this decision was put into the canon law of the Church of Rome, as our readers will see in our reply to "Philadelphes," and remains there to this day. If the Church of Rome do possess infallibility, why does she not use it better?

It is well for our correspondent that he lives in a Protestant country. In Rome or Spain he would stand a good chance of being treated as a heretic for setting up his own private judgment against a Pope and 113 bishops; and if the Synod of Thurles had the government of Ireland, they would hardly allow him to say that there could be no in-

fallibility without a general council. Will the decision of the Pope about the Immaculate Conception be infallible when it is made? or may it be like Pope Nicolas and his 113 bishops?

#### WAS THE JEWISH CHURCH THE CHURCH OF GOD IN ITS DAY?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—It is gratifying to see that the doctrine of Infallibility occupies so much of your space. It is the question. It is the baseless dogma on which rests the whole Papal superstructure. Leaving other points to yourself and your able correspondents, I will address myself to a favourite argument in its support, frequently put forward by Romish controversialists. A writer in one of your late numbers, Mr. Rourke, thus expresses it:—"If she (the Church) was liable to err, He (Christ) could not love her," p. 128. Because Romanists think it *advantageous* that the Church should be a living, speaking, infallible guide, they conclude that she *must* be so; and then they assume that God could not love her if she were not secured from error. Must God's Church, then, at all times, be infallible? If it be, at any time fallible, is it plain that God cannot love her? Was the Jewish Church God's Church, when the prophet Malachi uttered the oft-quoted words, "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts?" If God loved this Church, must it have been infallible? If so, then, its sentence must have been true—that Christ was an impostor. Mr. Rourke may take whichever horn of the dilemma he pleases. Either Christ was an impostor, or God's then Church was fallible; either God's Church, though loved, was fallible, or the Jewish Church, though God's Church, could not have been loved by him, seeing that he willed to leave her liable to error. So much for *a priori* arguments. Because Romanists think infallibility convenient, they must needs support it by pretending that infallibility is of the essence of a Church; and, by so doing, they un-Church the people of God before our Lord's time; and, to hide the monstrousness of this, and such other conclusions, they take the Bible out of the hands of the people.

Of course, those who stop at nothing, will find a way out of this as well as out of any other difficulty. God could love his *ancient* Church without its being infallible; but not so the *modern*. But is this reasonable? Or is it essentially necessary that the *Christian* Church should be infallible, but not so requisite that the *Jewish* should? But how know these men so well with what attributes it behoved the Allwise to endow his Church? Is it less than presumptuous to tell the world, that God could not have acted except in the manner which, to them, seems the best?

They have, no doubt, another way of escaping this difficulty. The Jewish Church, they will say, ceased to be infallible, *when it first pronounced a wrong decision*. This, I should think, we could know ourselves, without needing their acuteness to discover it for us. But the question is, why they were deprived of infallibility *prior* to their pronouncing this, their first faulty sentence? That the Jewish Church should have been once infallible; and, yet, should have been deprived of that gift *just prior* to its deciding upon Christ's pretensions, seems extraordinary. If ever there was a point upon which infallibility in the judge was important, it was that, the truth or falsehood of claims to the Messiahship. It is vain to say, that the grave nature of present questions makes a living, infallible judge necessary; no occasion could ever arise more momentous than when the Church was called upon to receive, or reject, the Son of God, presenting himself before her in human form.

If Romanists pretend, that the Jewish Church forfeited infallibility on account of her unfaithfulness to the trust committed to her, why might not any particular part of the Christian Church be deprived, for the same reason, of her privilege? Were not Rome, and the Churches in communion with her, sunk very low in the middle ages, not to speak of any other period of her history? Their own divines are compelled to own and lament this. But why is it incredible that God should make his guidance, both to us and the Jews, dependant upon the careful use we make of the light which we enjoy? We may regard each separate branch of the Church as liable to error; and yet trust that all branches will never unite in renouncing any fundamental of Christianity. But, whatever our hopes may be, let us not presume to say, that if God loved his Church, he could not possibly have left it devoid of a gift, which it is probable it never enjoyed for the 4,000 years before Christ; and which it is certain that it had lost *before* it rejected our Lord's pretensions to be the promised Messiah and the Saviour of the world.

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

A KILDARE CHURCHMAN.

#### CARDINAL WISEMAN AND THE APOCRYPHA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—As you invite any Roman Catholic priest or layman to state in your pages the evidence for the books called apocryphal, you will, probably, have no objection to print and take into consideration the following summary of the